

Signs of the Times in Hancock Co.

Scenes from Hancock County's communities
following Hurricane Katrina. Page 1B

The Sea Coast Echo

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Speedy Recovery



Hurricane Katrina fought city hall in Waveland and won, briefly, but the city has installed three new state-of-the-art tents to house city offices at the former city hall site on Coleman Ave. Echo staff photos by Geoff Belcher

'When we got help, it came in droves'

BY GEOFF BELCHER
News Editor

FEMA screwed up
...," U.S. Rep.
Gene Taylor said
Saturday, "but
when help came, it came
in droves," mainly due to
the efforts of the
Mississippi National
Guard and the U.S.
Armed Forces.

Taylor spoke Saturday
to about 60 Hancock
County residents whose
homes had either been
damaged or destroyed by
Hurricane Katrina. The
town hall-style meeting
was the first in a series
Taylor plans to host
around the storm-rav-
aged Fourth
Congressional District.

Taylor said bureau-
cratic bungling within
FEMA had delayed fed-
eral aid to the Coast, but
praised the National



U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor speaks Saturday in a "town hall" meeting at the Hancock Vo-Tech Center with Hancock Countians whose homes were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

Guard for its efforts in
bringing food and water
to Katrina's victims and
clearing the main roads
of storm debris in just a
matter of days.

"The good news, to
my knowledge," Taylor
said, "is that no one
starved to death. No one
died of dehydration. ...
I'm sorry it took a little

while. We literally went
around FEMA.

"I told the FEMA guy
I was very disappointed,
and if he was working for
me, he would be fired

right now."

Taylor also criticized
the Mississippi Health
Department. Although
the Navy had stationed
the U.S.S. Comfort just
off Ship Island to act as
an emergency hospital,
he said, "that bozo run-
ning the state department
of health wouldn't certify
the Comfort as a state
hospital."

Fortunately, he said,
the doctors stationed on
the Comfort - skilled in
combat and emergency
medicine - bypassed the
health department and
came ashore themselves
to help the people of
south Mississippi.

People who attended
Saturday's meeting told
Taylor that one of their
main concerns is hous-
ing. Literally hundreds of

RECOVERY-PAGE 6



Choice Market at Diamondhead, one of the few stores open in Hancock County in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, does a brisk business last week. Echo staff photo by John Few.

Judge declares 'hung jury' in DuPont DeLisle punitive case

BY BENNIE SHALLBETTER
Staff Writer

Judge Billy Landrum declared a mistrial Thursday in a case which could have awarded \$225 million in punitive damages to plaintiffs Glenn and Connie Strong of Bay St. Louis.

The Strong's said that toxic waste from the DuPont DeLisle titanium dioxide plant was responsible for Glenn's multiple myeloma. The jury agreed last month when they awarded the couple \$15.5 million in compensatory damages.

The case for punitive damages had originally been scheduled for Aug. 29 in Laurel, but was postponed due to Hurricane Katrina.

Plaintiff's attorneys asked for \$225 million in punitive damages.

"Punitive damages amount essentially to a slap on the wrist to current offenders and is a warning to other possible offenders. The award is meant to act as a deterrent to similar conduct," said plaintiff's attorney Kathleen Smiley.

The judge declared a mistrial after the jury had

been out for about an hour and were unable to come to a decision. The jury was hung in a 7-5 count. Nine jurors are required for a decision in these types of cases.

Landrum can set another trial date with another jury if he chooses to do so.

DuPont attorneys argued before the trial that Hurricane Katrina had disrupted the lives of jurors to such an extent that they could not concentrate on the case. They also argued that it had been too long since the jury had heard the evidence.

Plaintiffs' attorneys reiterated evidence submitted at last month's trial.

The defense put plant manager Pat Nichols and another expert on the stand. Nichols appealed to the jury not to punish the plant any more. She said that the jury had sent a message loud and clear and that the message had been heard.

DuPont will be working diligently to reduce pollution and dioxin production, Nichols told the jury.

"We are gratified by the result of the jury's

deliberation," Terry Gooding, DuPont DeLisle's director of public relations, said on Friday. "DuPont has called Mississippi home for more than 25 years. We are proud of our site, our employees and our commitment to safety."

"We have maintained all along that a punitive damage award would have been totally inappropriate. This outcome validates what we have said about the initial verdict. If jurors had been permitted to hear scientific evidence, we believe they would have rejected the plaintiffs' allegation. There is no connection between our operation and any health effects alleged by Mr. Strong."

"We will appeal the initial verdict and compensatory damages award."

Landrum excluded nine of DuPont's key witnesses before the beginning of last month's trial. The court took the action as a punishment for delaying tactics and because the court said the company did not follow the rules of cooperation in the discovery phase of the trial.

Plaintiffs' attorneys

told the court that the company would not make the nine excluded witnesses available for deposition.

DuPont still has five experts who could have presented evidence, but the defense chose to rest their case without calling those witnesses or presenting any evidence.

BY BENNIE SHALLBETTER

DuPont recovers from storm

BY BENNIE SHALLBETTER
Staff Writer

Plant officials issued orders to send employees home on the Saturday before Hurricane Katrina and begin a complete shutdown of plant operations, public relations director Terry Gooding said Tuesday.

When the plant shuts down all working lines and containers are drained and flushed, Gooding said. A 24 person severe weather team of experts takes over to monitor different areas of the plant until winds reach 50 to 55 mph, then the team goes into a severe weather dome to ride out the storm. When

the storm passes, the team comes out to assess the impact from a safety and environmental aspect, Gooding said.

A levy system was built to withstand a storm surge similar to the one experienced in Camille, but with a 32 foot tidal surge, Gooding said, that brought about seven feet of water over the levy. The water did not get in waste sites, Gooding said because of protective berms around the waste units. Several rail containers of chlorine did turn over but remained contained, Gooding said.

Initial assessments by the severe weather team indicated no environ-

mental releases, except for about a pound of chlorine, Gooding said and later assessments, three by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and two by the Environmental Protection Agency indicated the same results, he said.

The plant did suffer significant damage to process control systems and other electrical and electronic equipment and plant infrastructure. If everything goes as planned the plant will be up and running in three months and up to full capacity by the spring of 2006.

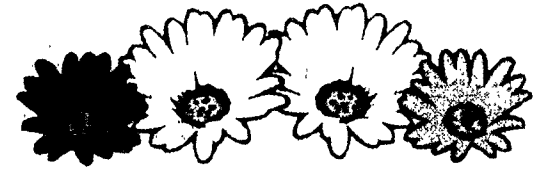
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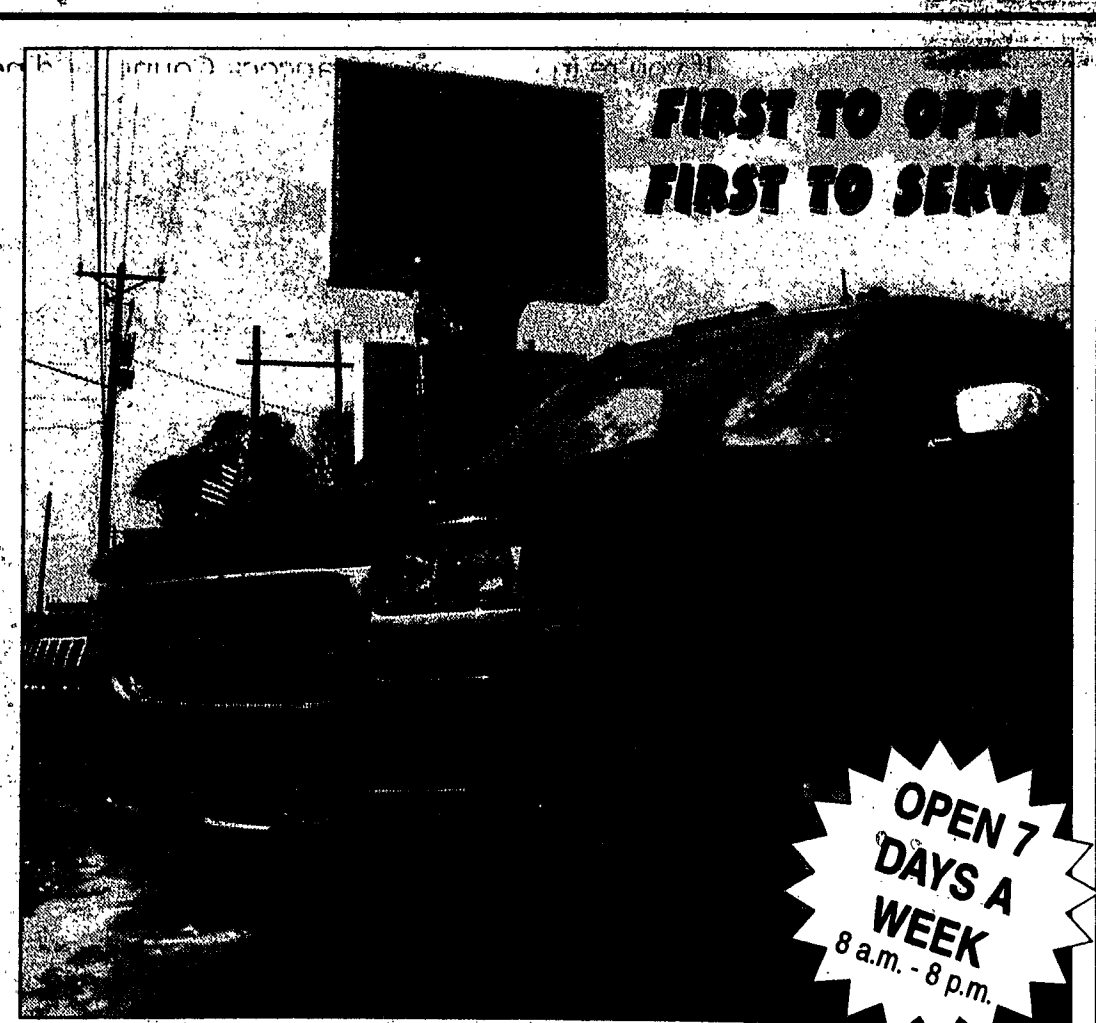
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Opinion

SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 25, 2005

PG 4A

Ponderings

by James R. "Randy" Ponder
Editor and Publisher

Seeing stars after Katrina

I saw something I had not seen in many, many years the night after Hurricane Katrina destroyed Hancock County and most of the area between New Orleans and Mobile.

It was close to midnight and everyone was just completely exhausted and all were in bed except for me. I walked out of our hot, dark house and looked up at the moonless night sky. There was the Milky Way. Billions and billions of stars twinkling above.

The last time I had seen the Milky Way so brilliantly was way back when I was a young boy camping in the north Georgia foothills. I was fascinated. Everything around me was totally dark, no breeze and not even the crickets were chirping. I went inside and woke my sleeping nine year old son Patrick, insisting that he come outside to see. Once outside, his first words were, "where did all those stars come from?" I explained that they had always been here, that we just couldn't see them because of all the lights around us. We even saw a couple of shooting stars. Each night for the next 10 or 11 days I would look up at those stars, thinking about how lucky we were to still be alive and to still have a place to live.

All the while, members of the Georgia Power Company were working our neighborhood, repairing the downed power lines. The first truck was on the scene within three or four days of the hurricane.

When a bucket truck stopped in front of my house, I offered the men cold water and inquired as to what part of Georgia they came from. I must admit I was a little surprised when the fellow stated he was from Cedartown. That's my hometown. I had left there right out of high school on the path that would eventually lead me to Hancock County and the Sea Coast Echo. I told the fellow that I was also from Cedartown and then told him my name. He said you have to be kidding. I assured him I was indeed Randy Ponder and he proclaimed we were cousins! Now it was my turn to be skeptical.

His name was David Compton. Still, it did not register. I was probably still dazed and confused by all the destruction surrounding me. He continued by stating he was at my mother's home when I drove up in my very first car. 'Yea, what was it?' 'A red Chevelle Super Sport with black racing stripes on the hood. "You had long hair and your mother cried when she saw you in that car."

He had proved his point. His older brother Denny and I used to hang out together. We were 16 or 17 and didn't have too much to do with David because he was several years younger. But here he was and I was certainly glad to see him. His mother had married my uncle. A second marriage for each.

David then informed me the person driving the Georgia Power truck behind him was also from Cedartown. His name was David Hughes and his older brother was in my class of 1970. That's one for the small world category.

In the following weeks, I have run into numerous people from Cedartown. Such as Billy Williams, busy cooking food across from the fire station in Bay St. Louis. There was also a fire and rescue team from Cedartown here. To all, I say thanks for caring, thanks for being here for us.

The power in my area was restored several days later. To me, it was a bittersweet success. We were all very grateful to have electricity, but it also meant the end of my viewing the Milky Way each night. I kept these thoughts to myself and secretly thought there might be something bad wrong with me for thinking this way.

Then I spoke with Picayune Item publisher Tom Andrews while awaiting his pressroom crew to finish printing the Sea Coast Echo. He confessed the same feelings. I felt better but then realized he too was most likely slightly deranged. I guess it goes with the territory.

STORM SURGE



Katrina versus Camille

It was 36 years ago when the Mississippi Gulf Coast was ravaged by Hurricane Camille.

Everyone thought Camille was the ultimate storm in the continental United States.

Katrina did not only destroy the Mississippi Gulf Coast, but also the city of New Orleans and several Parishes.

Some of this writer's observations comparing the days following Katrina, Camille, and the 1947 Hurricane follow.

When the 1947 storm arrived, Hancock County residents did not receive a word about a hurricane heading their way until the day before it hit. After the 1947 Hurricane struck Florida, every assumed it died.

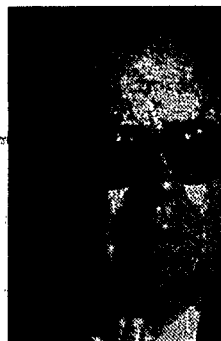
I was at home with my mother, father and youngest brother. My two middle brothers were staying the night with an elderly friend of the family, Mr. F.E. Dietz.

Mr. Dietz's son-in-law, L.L. "Bits" Soloanas was probably the first outsider to arrive in Waveland following the 194 Hurricane. He came from New Orleans by sea plane that landed out from Nicholson Ave. My family never received one red cent from any agency. Our Jeff Davis home lost half of its roof. We were able to gather roofing blown off to cover beds, armours, etc.

Beach front businesses were destroyed, as was the rail road bridge. Beach Road washed out to the steps of Our Lady of the Gulf Church.

Many homes, especially in the Cedar Point, Clermont Harbor, Lakeshore, Ansley, and Waveland, were destroyed.

The Seawall from the



Cuevas' Quotes

by Ellis C. Cuevas
Publisher Emeritus

Jordan River to Bayou Caddy, completed in the late 1930s, was in shambles. Supervisors finally completed repairs in 1956.

One could walk under the road since the water washed out almost the entire foundation.

Following the storm, my father and Mr. Dietz, equipped with a saw and ax, took off in a Model A Ford for Bay St. Louis. They had to cut the way through downed trees. At W.A. McDonald and Sons, they acquired necessary roofing materials.

Since the 1947 storm crossed the Louisiana marshes, there was an influx of dead cattle and horses. The dead animals were taken to big burrow pits where they were burned.

School was closed for several weeks.

When Camille struck, I was general manager and advertising director at the Echo. We were located in the old Woodman of the World building at the head of Court St. Back then, we published once a week on Thursdays. We only missed one publication day. Our first issue was 10 pages, and we printed in Donaldsonville, LA.

About 3 am. I was delivering the Echo's first issue after the storm to the Bobby Anne bakery. We would drop the papers off in the alley by the ovens. I left the engine running and when I returned to my car, I was challenged by a lieu-

tenant and sergeant, one holding a .45 and the other a carbine. The bakery was across the street from the Post Office. We were under marshal law but I had a pass.

Our supermarkets and other interior businesses lost their plate glass windows. The food was condemned by the State Board of Health.

A few friends of Jane

and I spent the night with me, as Jane was at work at the Hospital. Our friends' Cedar Point home was destroyed. When the storm was over, we walked to Loiacanos A & J Food Store on Main St., where we purchased several items. The windows were blown and the building was damaged, but Mr. Joe was always open for business.

Hancock General Hospital had water lapping at its doors. They lost power and had a generator on the ground, several feet lower than the hospital. Like all

QUOTES-PAGE 6A

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James R. (Randy) Ponder, Editor and Publisher
Geoff Belcher, News Editor

Ellis C. Cuevas, Publisher Emeritus

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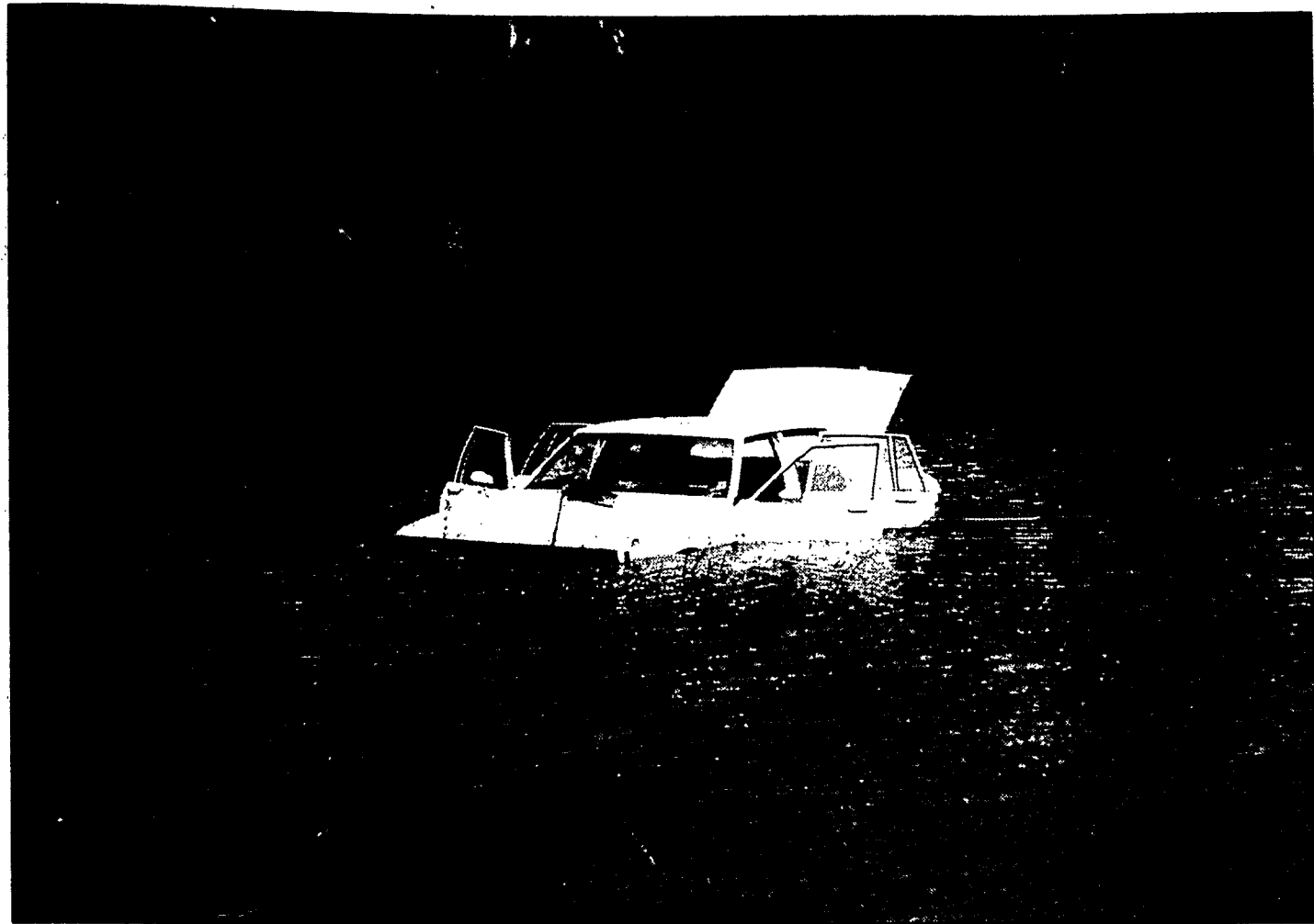
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Ritaville



The eastern edge of Hurricane Rita, which made landfall near Port Arthur, Texas on Saturday, lashed the Mississippi Gulf Coast on Friday and Saturday, causing flooding in the low-lying areas of already storm-ravaged Hancock County. MEMA and the Hancock EOC on Friday issued mandatory evacuations orders for low-lying areas, and many area services closed down early on Friday.

Echo staff photos by Geoff Belcher and Jace Ponder

Hancock Co. recovery update

SCHOOLS UPDATE - Superintendent of Bay-Waveland Schools Dr. Kim Stasny and her team are working to re-open schools by Nov. 1. Portable classrooms will start arriving Monday.

HANCOCK CO. COURT has begun restoring and filing Deeds of Trust and Chancery Court cases at the temporary County Finance Office at the Emergency Operation Center.

FOR HANCOCK CO. BUSINESS

or related questions, contact Jimmy Ladner at the Tax Assessor's Office at Kiln-DeLisle Rd. near Dolly's.

PROVIDING FEMA WITH ACCURATE CONTACT INFORMATION on your application will expedite home inspection. Sixty to 80 FEMA inspectors are now working here. If your phone numbers are now different from those you put on your Right of Entry Form, let FEMA know.

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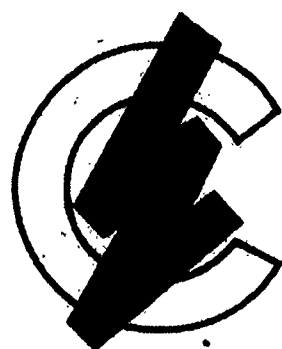
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Recovery

Continued from Page 1

people in Hancock County are currently living in tents or under tarps while they wait for temporary housing.

"The closest I ever came to killing anyone was the 99th time I heard the FEMA guy say 'the trailers are in the pipeline,'" Taylor said. Much of the bureaucratic red tape has been cut through now, he said, and more people should be getting camper trailers from FEMA soon.

Many also complained of getting "the run-around" from their insurance companies.

"The sad fact is, there is absolutely zero federal regulation of the insurance industry," Taylor said.

He urged people to

contact their state legislators to make sure insurance companies deal fairly with them.

One bright note, he said, is that the Small Business Association "will be very, very generous," when helping people acquire loans to help with their home repairs.

"This is the one case where the last will be first," he said. "People with terrible credit will probably get a better interest rate than people with great credit."

Interest rates for SBA loans are running between 2-and-5.7 percent, he said.

Taylor said his temporary office, located in a trailer outside the Bay St. Louis Train Depot, is open to assist people in

getting the help they need.

Among other items federal, state and local government is currently working on in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Taylor said:

- Getting water and sewer lift stations operational all across the Coast.

- Testing the water in the Mississippi Sound to ensure that people don't get sick from eating the seafood.

- Clearing the canals of storm debris to get the shrimping industry operational again.

- Working to get the casinos operational so the Tidelands Fund will again be viable.

Calling all artists!!!

Hurricane Katrina has disrupted and dispersed our local art community. But hopefully the storm has not destroyed the art community which adds so much to the unique character of Bay St. Louis, Waveland and surrounding areas.

In the wake of the hurricane, efforts are underway to find the 200 plus visual artists, sculptors, writers, poets, musicians and performing artists who make up the local art community. Many fled and have yet to return. Others, returning to find their homes, businesses and studios devastated, have sought shelter with family or friends. Those remaining here are caught up, like so many others, in the day-to-day struggle to survive.

One might ask why it's so important to locate area artists when there are still so many other pressing needs. The answer is simple. Funding is available, on a national level and state level, to assist artists, art museums and art businesses in need. Gwen Impson, president of The Arts, Hancock County, explains that its much easier for an entity such as the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum to report losses

than for individual artists. "We need to locate our artists and document their needs as quickly as possible to take advantage of any emergency funds available. This effort is hindered by the lack of phone service."

Impson said an email was sent out to all members with the hope that those artists who have taken shelter elsewhere will receive it and respond. The email asks: Where are you? How are you? Describe the extent of your losses. What are your immediate needs

and your long term needs? How can you be reached? And are you planning on coming home to Hancock county? Flyers are being distributed to try and reach local artists to ascertain the same results. Once local artists are located, a meeting will be held. While it is vital to document hurricane losses, it's also important to begin the next stage...keeping our art community alive. For more information, contact Gwen Impson on her cell phone at 228-263-6530.

Football rescheduled

High school football games scheduled for last Friday night have been rescheduled because of Hurricane Rita. Bay

High will host Long Beach at 7 p.m. and Pass Christian will travel to Poplarville for a 7 p.m. game.

Quotes

Continued from Page 4

employees at HGH, Jane lost her car. The old HGH building had several feet of water in Katrina. Surface water was the real big difference in Katrina in comparing to other hurricanes.

Grocery, dry goods, service stations, etc. came back within 2 to 3 weeks following Camille. You know the situation following

Katrina. The time of hurricane winds during Katrina was much longer than Camille. On the other hand, Camille's winds were of greater strength.

No questions about it, we have much more outside help following Katrina than Camille.

Now on the individual basis after Camille, especially in Waveland, more individual help came

from the New Orleans area. They were hit by flooding by Hurricane Betsy just four years before.

A few people received some help from the Red Cross after 1947 Hurricane. With the greatest hurricane ever, Katrina, Hancock County, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and neighboring Louisiana, should be back greater than ever.



Darryl Tolle, left, and Ron Davis bring a Ryder Truck full of relief supplies from the Toyota plant in Georgetown, Ky. for Hurricane Katrina victims.

DuPont helps with storm relief

BY BENNIE SHALLBETTER
Staff Writer

Much of the DuPont DeLisle plant site was covered in about seven feet of water said, public relations director Terry Gooding Tuesday, pretty much most of the plant site except for the administration building. Water destroyed all of the plant's computer systems and process systems. Initial assessments indicate it will take about three months to get the plant up and running again, he said.

Meanwhile employees will be kept on the payroll, Gooding said,

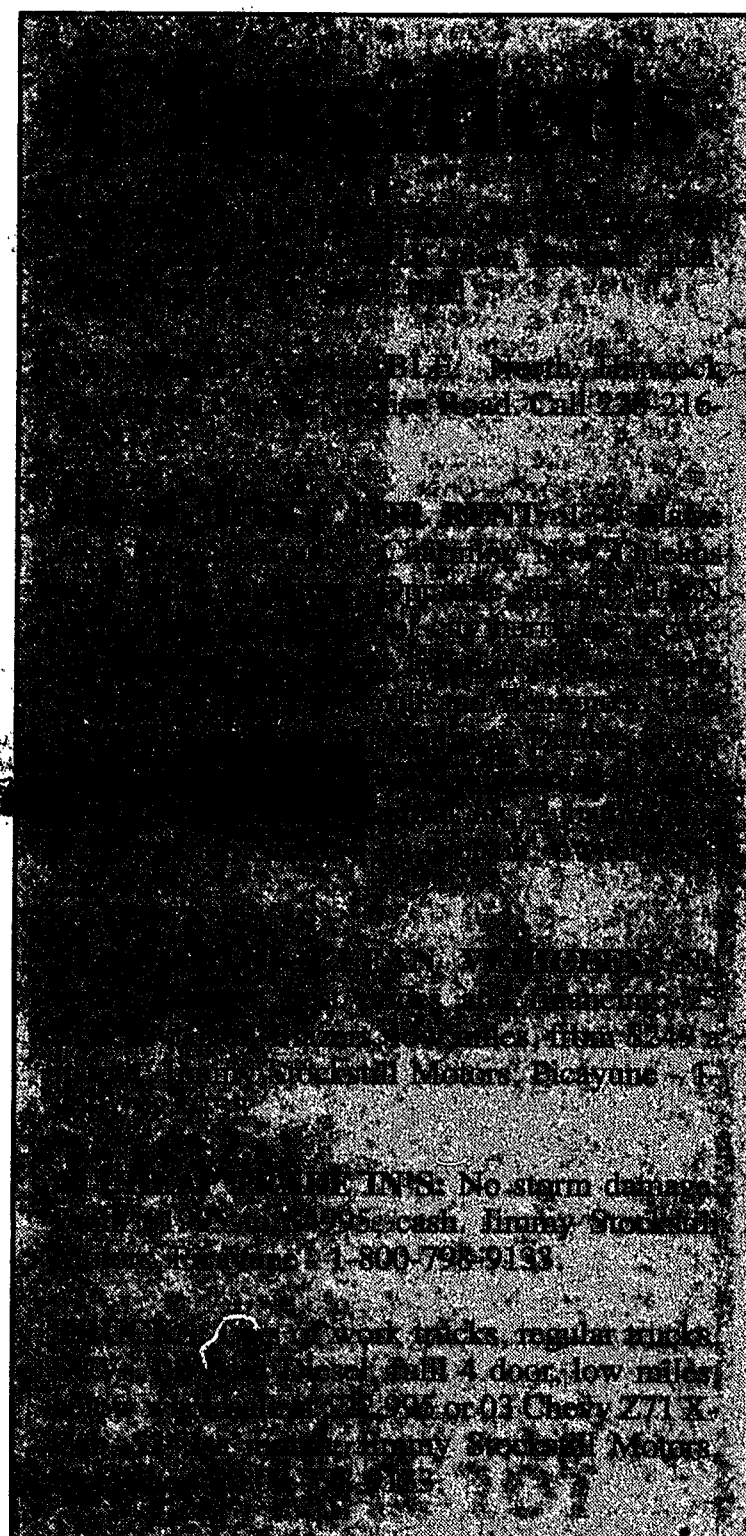
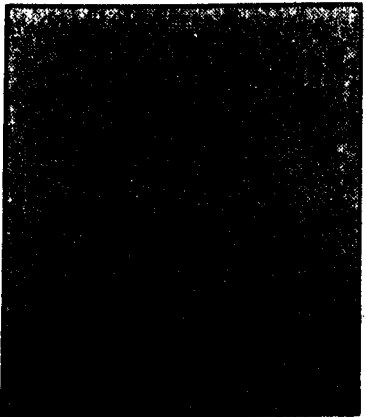
though some will perform other jobs until the plant is up and running. The company has set up a village of trailers at the plant's recreation site with one trailer being used as storage for free food and other items that families of employees may need while they are at the site. Employees themselves are fed three meals a day.

Some have chosen to move the trailers to their own homes. Trailers were provided by DuPont and FEMA, Gooding said. The company has also met individually with employees to assess other needs, he said. For the village the plant installed electric, water

and sewer service for about 75 sites.

They also set up a site for FEMA assistance, Red Cross assistance, and medical needs. To find missing employees the company hired a team of searchers and located the last missing person at a campground in Alabama. Initially the plant instructed everyone to just go home and take care of immediate needs, Gooding said, and then gradually set up a temporary work schedule. Now everyone is pretty much back to a regular schedule, he said. Most are working to get the plant up and running or in community outreach programs.

A team goes into about 40 sites at surrounding communities each day to touch base with officials and others to assess needs for each community. The plant has delivered everything from staples, to cleaning supplies, to travel trailers (for Long Beach city government) and want to do more, Gooding said.



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(TTY: 1-800-462-7585)

Mississippi Emergency Management Agency:
601-352-9100

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

1-800-311-3435

American Red Cross:
1-866-GET-INFO (1-866-438-4636)

Mississippi Department of Health:

General information:
1-866-HLTHY4U (1-866-458-4948)

Epidemiology reporting line:

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West Nile virus Hotline:
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Mississippi Department of Health District Offices:

(As phone service is restored statewide)
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District Eight: (601)

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Coyington, Forrest, Greene, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Lamar, Marion, Perry, Wayne

District Nine: (228) 831-5151
George, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, Stone

Additional resources

for locating loved ones:

National Next of Kin Registry: 1-360-739-7206
American Red Cross: 1-877-LOVED-1S (1-877-568-3317)

Resource numbers for those who wish to help in the relief effort

To make donations:

American Red Cross: 1-800-HELP-NOW (1-800-435-7669)

Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Donation Hotline:

601-360-0861 or 1-

866-230-8906

Salvation Army:

1-800-725-2769

To volunteer:

Physicians and Emergency Medical Technicians:

601-576-8085

Nurses:

601-497-8022

Physicians and nurses out of state:

1-800-272-2707

Professional Search and Rescue Volunteers:

601-360-0937

Together We Rebuild.

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Online Banking Is Free & Convenient!

Go to www.hancockbank.com and check your balance and transaction history, transfer funds from one Hancock account to another, and use Bill Pay. Don't forget—we're waiving the fee for Internet Bill Pay until further notice.

No Fees On ATMs

Hancock Bank is waiving and/or rebating its charges for customers who use non-Hancock ATMs in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina until further notice. More Hancock ATMs are becoming operational each day.

Branches Are Reopening Daily

Every day, another Hancock branch reopens to serve you. As of September 16, Hancock Bank has 86 branches open, including 36 in Mississippi, 45 in Louisiana and all five Florida branches. Visit www.hancockbank.com for daily updates on branch openings.

Two Easy Ways To Reorder Checks

If your checks were lost during Katrina, you can reorder by going online at www.hancockbank.com or calling 1-800-355-8123 (reference code: L3). Please be aware that the Post Office has temporarily suspended mail delivery to some of the hardest hit areas. This may prolong delivery time or make it necessary for your checks to be delivered to an alternate address or the closest available branch. Hancock associates will work with you to ensure prompt, secure delivery of your checks.

Special Disaster Relief Offers

From fee relief to expedited services on new mortgages, loan payment relief for those who qualify and discounted rates on new consumer installment loans*, Hancock Bank can help. We've assembled a variety of resources to make recovery and rebuilding easier and faster. Ask us for details today.

If you have a question or need information regarding your accounts, please visit www.hancockbank.com or call one of these numbers:

Mississippi, 1-800-448-8812; Louisiana, 1-800-256-4636; Florida, 1-800-726-0920.
Call Center Open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday–Friday; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday

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customers
as they build
toward a

brighter future...

in the aftermath
of Hurricane
Katrina!



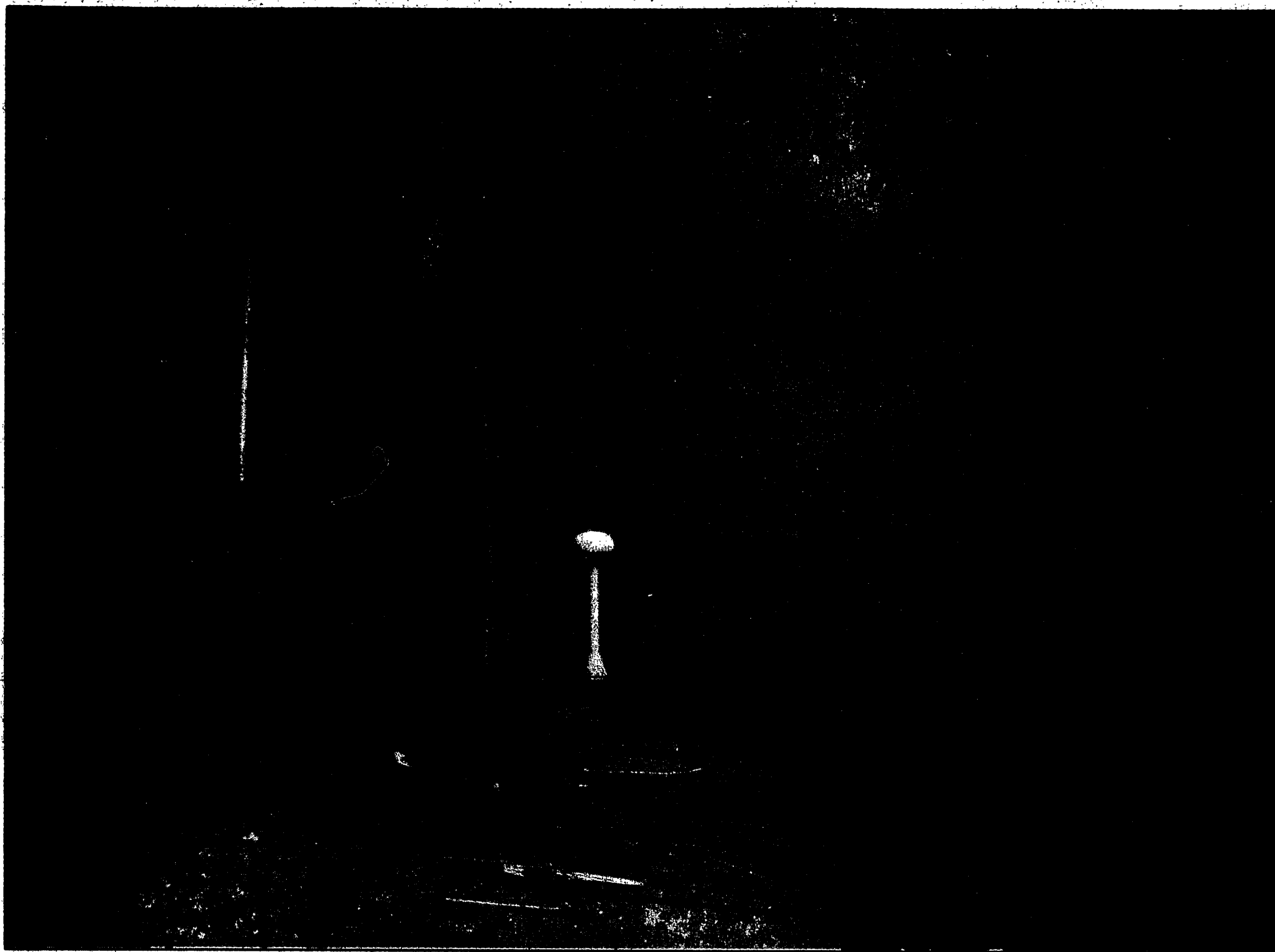
SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 25, 2005

Community

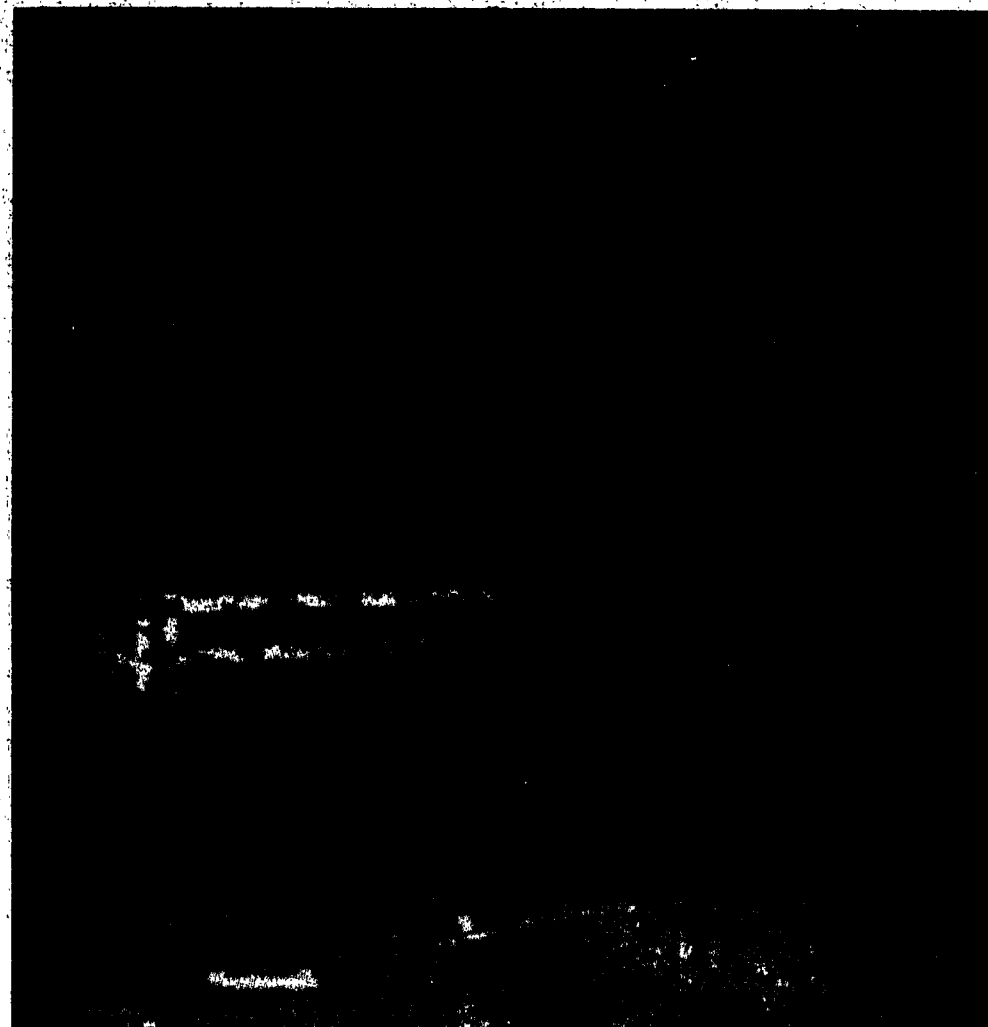
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Signs of the Times

Living in Hancock County after Hurricane Katrina

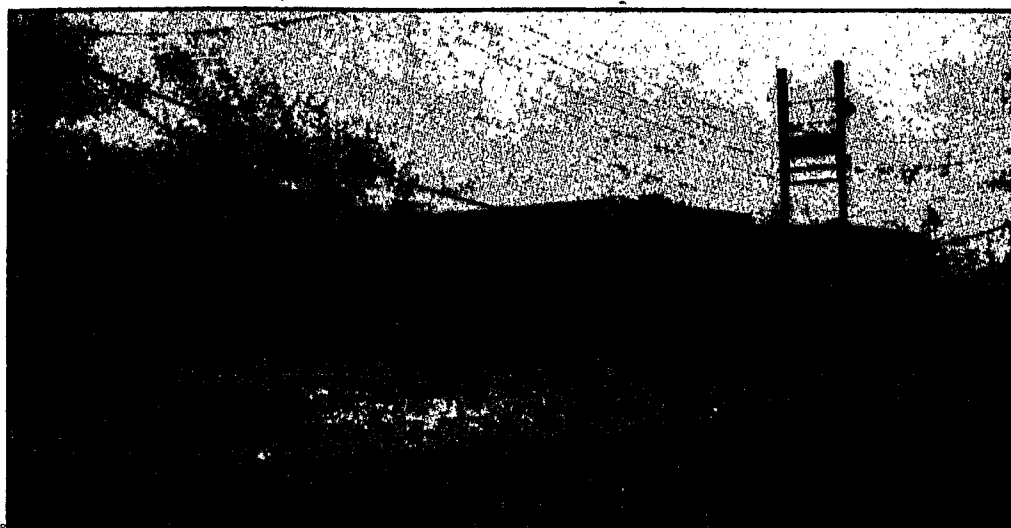


Echo staff photo by Randy Ponder



Echo staff photo by Geoff Belcher

A dead 10-foot alligator at Nicholson Ave. in Waveland.



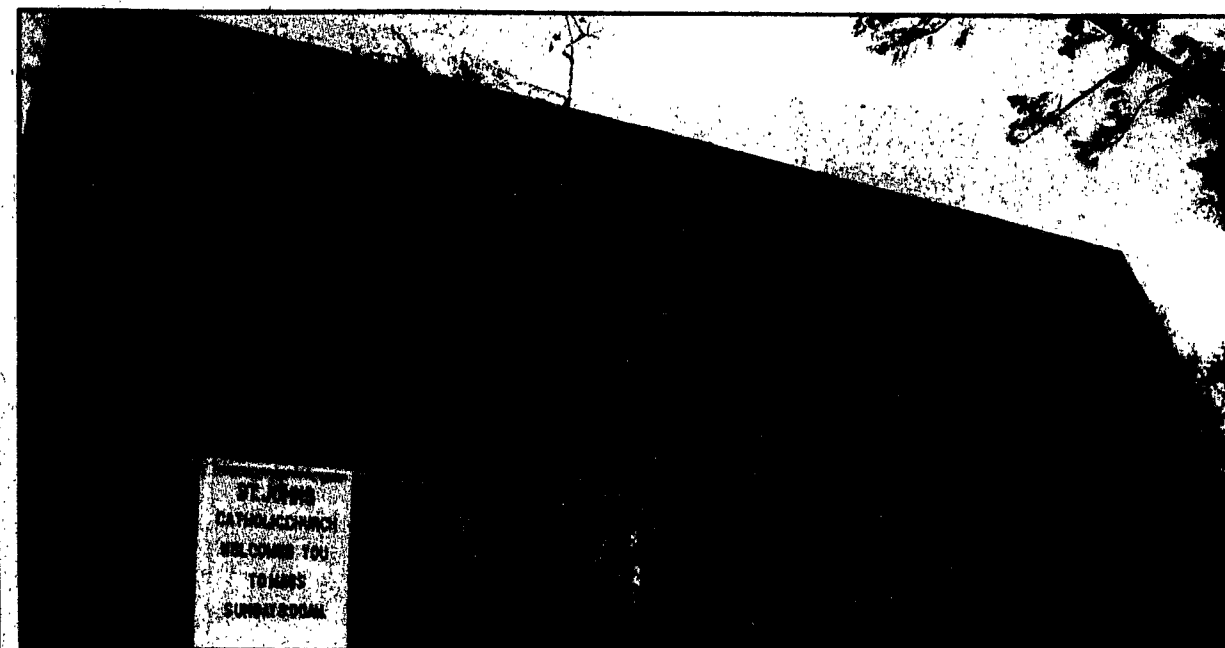
Echo staff photo by Randy Ponder

The roof of the Diamondhead Yacht Club rests in the Texaco parking lot.



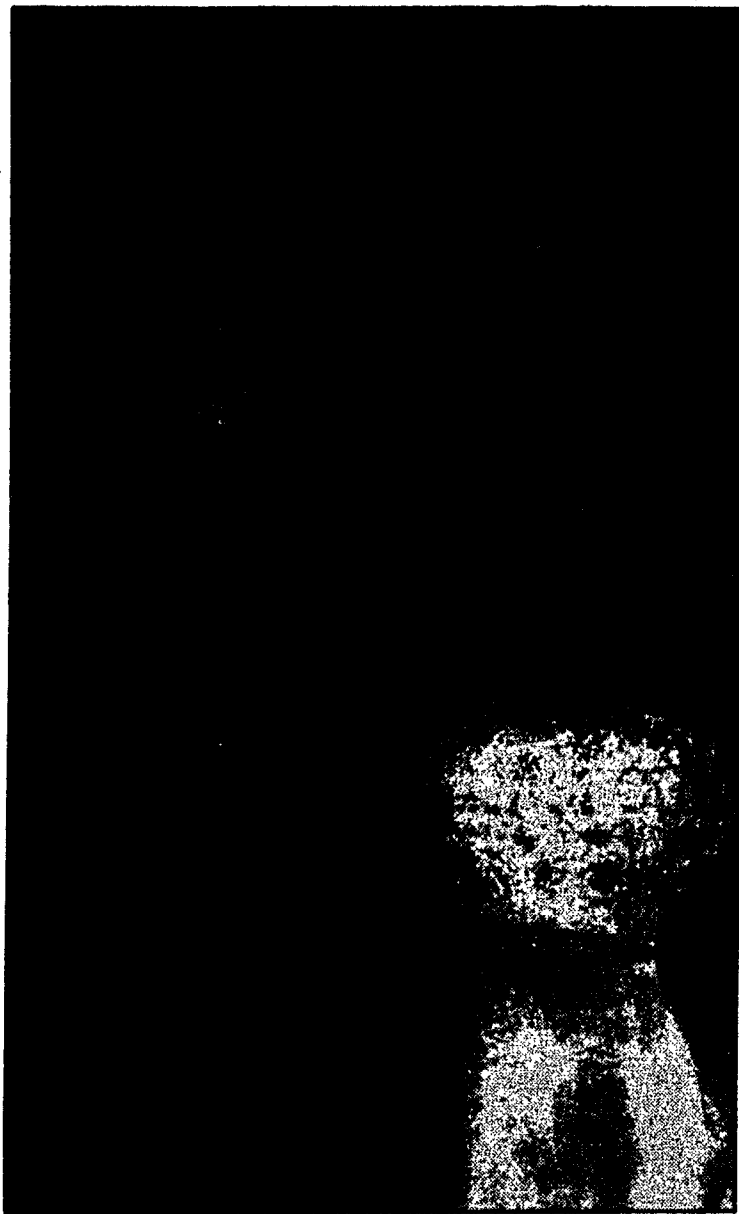
Echo staff photo by John Few

The entrance to the "New Waveland Cafe and Market."



Echo staff photo by Randy Ponder

The remaining portion of St. John's Catholic Church at Lakeshore Rd.



Mr. and Mrs. Scott Edward Cuevas

Garcia-Cuevas

Joelle Andrea Garcia and Scott Edward Cuevas of Memphis, TN, were married on August 13, 2005 at Broadmoor Presbyterian Church, Baton Rouge, LA.

The bride is the daughter of Mrs. Peggy Smith Carpenter and the late Moises Garcia, III, of Baton Rouge, LA.

The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Edward Cuevas of Pearlinton, MS.

The officiating minister was Hawley Wolfe. Organist Judy McGehee and trumpeter Mike Bellinger provided music.

The bride was given in marriage by her brother, Michael Moises Garcia. She wore a white satin, A-line gown with a sweetheart neckline; spaghetti straps; gown embellished with beading and embroidery on bodice and along cathedral length train. She carried a cascade bouquet of

dark purple, black magic and red roses, mini calla lilies and lisianthus. The bridesmaids' clutches were of white roses, mini callas and lisianthus.

The Maid of Honor was Julie Garcia Aldridge. Jolie Garcia Porter, MD, Kristi Lynn Smith, Amy Betz Abadie, Amanda Dawson Gilliland, and Sophia Zelikov served as bridesmaids.

Leslie Fillingame, Jr., was the Best Man. Groomsmen were Joseph Baubles, Jeremy Hand, David Heitzmann, David Moll, and Daniel Shrum. Steven Lapsley, Vincent Price, and John Massone, Jr., served as ushers.

Following the wedding a reception was held at Lake-House Reception Center. A rehearsal dinner was held at Juban's.

After a honeymoon to St. Lucia, the couple will be making their home in Memphis, TN.

Job opportunities

Job seekers will have access to more than 50 employers at the Northeast Mississippi WIN Job Fair in Corinth.

The Job Fair will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tuesday, September 27, 2005, at the Crossroads Arena in Corinth and is open to the public free of charge.

"The employers who will be at our Job Fair are there for one reason and that is to find employees," said Joe Buckner, Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Job Fair Director.

Buckner said that participating employers represent a wide range of skill levels and types of jobs. Job opportunities include state and federal government positions, law enforcement, medical, manufacturing, truck driving, computer-related positions, management and education.

Buckner said participating employers include Ace Training Center, Caterpillar, Northeast Mississippi State Hosnital, Swift

Transportation and the U.S. Boarder Patrol.

Buckner advises job seekers to arrive early, dress appropriately for a job interview and bring several copies of their resumes.

MDES Public Information Director Liz Barnett said the Job Fair is the ideal setting for those seeking employment. "Where else but at our Job Fair can an applicant for employment find more than 50 potential employers waiting to discuss available jobs, all at no expense to the job seeker," Barnett said.

Applicants can review a listing of all participating employers on the MDES Web site at mdes.ms.gov or www.jobfairs.ms.gov. Other sponsors of the Job Fair are the Mississippi Development Authority, Employment and Training Division, WILD 107.7 Radio, Mississippi Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Alcorn Career & Technology Center, The Daily Corinthian and WTN Job Centers.

Red Cross numbers show Katrina's destruction of MS

BILOXI, Miss. (AP) — New figures show that more than 33 percent of the estimated 171,000 dwellings in Mississippi's six most southern counties have been destroyed by Hurricane Katrina's combination of 160 mph sustained winds and 30-foot or higher tidal surge.

The estimated numbers were released Wednesday by the Red Cross and are yet another indication that Katrina will likely be judged as one of America's worst natural disasters.

The storm cut a 300-mile-wide swath that left severe damage in Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, Stone, and George counties.

The Red Cross said one-fifth of all apartments, houses, condos, duplexes, trailers and

others homesteads sustained major damage and also may have to be destroyed, while 30 percent sustained minor damage in the six counties.

Some badly damaged buildings may not be repairable, the Red Cross said, and some homes with minor damage may also be condemned. As a result, Katrina could potentially render three out of every four dwellings in the six-county area are unlivable.

"That doesn't surprise me," said Richard Bennett, a Long Beach alderman. "Every day people are coming to my house knocking on my door wanting me to help them get housing."

Bennett, whose town looks like Ground Zero of a nuclear attack in some areas, said that he

has gotten housing requests from the rich and the poor.

It seems Katrina was indiscriminate in its destructiveness, he said.

Only around 16,000 homes, less than 10 percent of the total homes in the area, avoided getting damaged in some way.

The Red Cross collected its data on dwelling destruction by a combination of fly-overs, satellite imagery and citizens' reports, said Catherine Kane, a Red Cross spokeswoman.

The team gathering the data completed the report Saturday and will update it as it gathers more information. Kane cautioned that these are only

estimates. State and federal officials said they do not yet have official counts of property damage in the Coast region.

About 3,500 Mississippi homes were destroyed outside of the six coastal counties, the Red Cross said.

Regardless of what the final count may be, the vastness of the destruction is manifesting itself in a major housing shortage.

As of Sunday, 154,000 Mississippians had applied for assistance, Gov. Haley Barbour said.

"If you assume 20 percent of them need housing, that's 30,000 people," Barbour said.

What came after the dinosaurs?

After the Dinosaurs: Prehistoric Mammals brings a lively group of stomping, roaring, animated creatures to the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science from October 7, 2005 to January 8, 2006.

Eight extinct animals come alive in this exhibition. They include a Hippopotamus-like Baluchitherium, a saber-toothed cat family of four, a huge Woolly Mammoth, plus five other exciting robotic creatures from this tumultuous time in Earth's past. In addition educational programming encourages aspiring paleontologists to "bone-up" on prehistoric facts.

Museum Director, Libby Hartfield comments "We are excited to welcome these prehistoric giants manufactured in Los Angeles by Kokoro Dinosaurs. Kokoro uses the latest robotic technology to give each creature its own unique sequence of movement and sound."

Kokoro Dinosaurs designs each animal through consultation with paleontologists at museums and universities throughout the United States and Canada. The models are updated almost every year to reflect the latest scientific discoveries.

The Museum is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m. Call 601/354-7303 for additional information.

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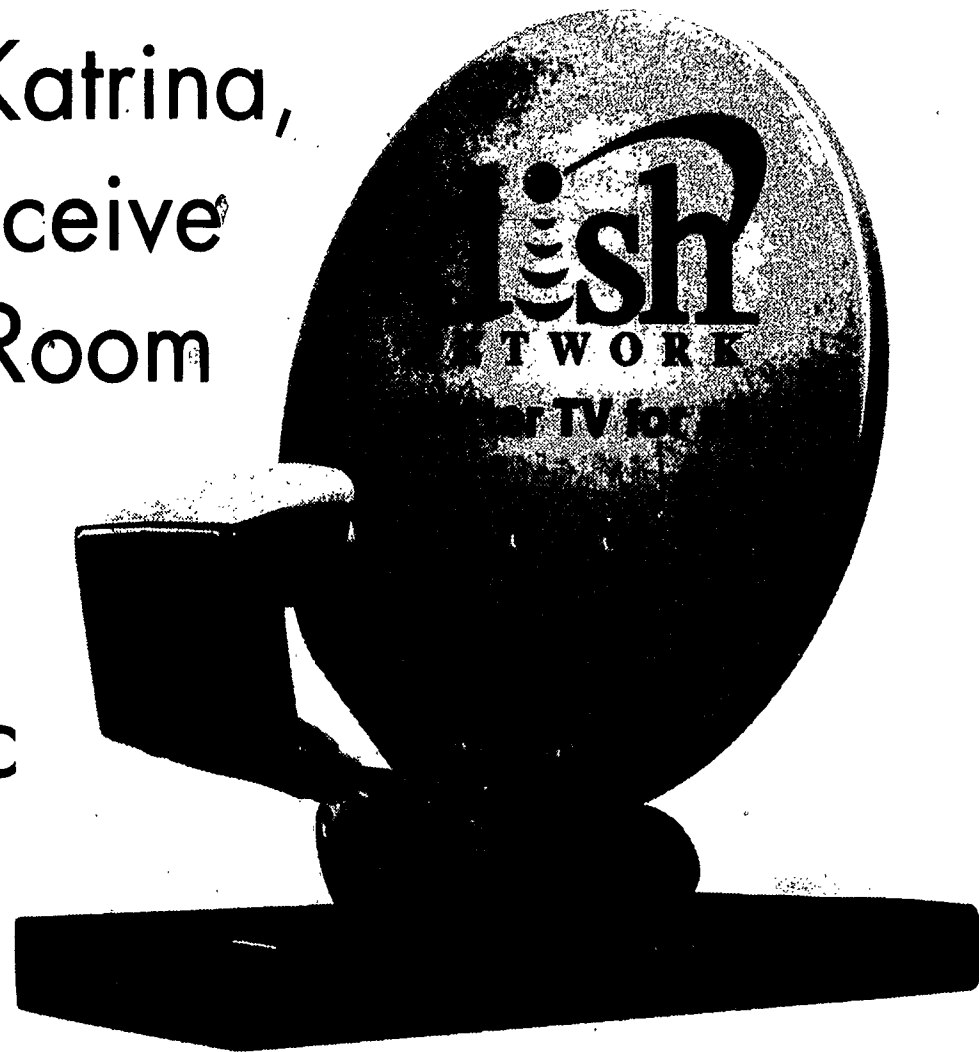
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2 of 25 movie channels require HD monitor and receiver. Free programming requires participation in Digital Home Advantage offer. After free period, customer must call to downgrade to other qualifying programming or then-current price for selected programming package will apply. Digital Home Advantage: Pay \$49.99 Activation Fee; receive \$49.99 credit on first bill with 18-month qualifying programming purchase. Requires Social Security Number, valid major credit card and credit approval. If qualifying service is terminated prior to end of 18-month period, a cancellation fee equal to the lesser of \$240 or \$13.33 per cancelled month of service will apply. Equipment must be returned to DISH Network upon termination of qualifying service. Limit 4 tuners per account. Monthly package price includes \$5.00 equipment rental fee for first receiver. \$5.00/mo. equipment rental fee applies for each additional receiver. A \$4.99/mo. additional outlet programming access fee applies for each dual-tuner receiver; fee will be waived monthly for each such receiver continuously connected to Customer's phone line. Monthly \$4.98 DISH Network DVR Service fee applies for each DISH Player-DVR. Next Day Installation Offer available in most geographic areas; eligibility based on service address.

Offer ends 1/31/06 and is available in the continental United States for new, first-time DISH Network residential customers. All prices, packages and programming subject to change without notice. Local and state sales taxes may apply. Where applicable, equipment rental fees and programming are taxed separately. All DISH Network programming, and any other services that are provided, are subject to the terms and conditions of the promotional agreement and Residential Customer Agreement, available at www.dishnetwork.com or upon request. Local Channels packages by satellite are only available to customers who reside in the specified local Designated Market Area (DMA). Local channels may require an additional dish antenna or a SuperDISH antenna from DISH Network, installed free of any charges with subscription to local channels at time of initial installation. Social Security Numbers are used to obtain credit scores and will not be released to third parties except for verification and collection purposes only or if required by governmental authorities. All service marks and trademarks belong to their respective owners.

Smart Home Electronics Terms and Conditions:
Offer requires minimum purchase for at least twelve (12) consecutive months of America's Top 60 programming package at \$31.99 per month. Cancellation penalty will apply if service is terminated prior to 12 months. Description of free standard professional installation is available upon request.

Guidelines for home repair or improvement contracting

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General offers these guidelines as suggestions to help consumers avoid possible misunderstandings about home improvements. If you follow these guidelines and insist upon a written contract, some of the most common problems with home repair or addition contractors might be avoided. If in doubt, or if you are agreeing to spend a lot of money, you should have a local attorney go over your contract before you sign.

1. Get at least three estimates (bids). Be certain each contractor bids on exactly the same work. If one contractor bids on more work than others, make a note of it.

In any event, all bids should be itemized.

2. Know who you are dealing with. Find out the contractor's address and verify it. Ask for and check references (previous customers, bank references). Inspect work done for others when possible.

3. A reputable contractor can usually charge building materials and does not normally require a large down payment. Where one is required, it should not exceed 10%-25% of the total price.

4. Be specific. Have samples, model numbers, pictures or anything else that will show the contractor exactly what you want. If you don't specify the quality of materials in the contract, you

are leaving it up to the contractor to decide what material will be used.

5. Be certain the materials you have selected are what you want. Changing your mind in the middle of a construction project is costly. If you do change your mind, be prepared to pay (extra).

6. No one is required to guarantee his work or product. If you want to guarantee (warranty), make sure it is written in the contract and you understand it. If you are dissatisfied with any part of the work, speak up before the job is completed.

7. Accept no verbal agreements. Any changes in the contract should be written out and initialed by both parties.

8. Contracts should specify a beginning and completion date, exact description of job to be done, total cost of job, exact schedule for payment and warranty or guarantee which can be expected. (If contract is for an hourly rate or on a "cost plus" basis, get an estimate of total cost.)

9. Do not pay the contractor or repairman the full amount due until the job has been completed satisfactorily.

10. Keep a signed readable copy of the contract in safe place.

Note: Often on large projects payment is based on portions of completed work. Such as: 25% of total payment is due when 25% of the work has been satisfactorily completed.

Beware of home repair scams

If recent flooding has forced you to rebuild, make sure you get your money's worth. Fraudulent home repair contractors may try to get their hands on your insurance money.

Crooked contractors may promise to do repairs on your home's electric wiring, roof and driveways but then leave town after doing little or no work. Be careful—if a con-artist takes your money, it may be impossible to get it back.

Protect yourself from a

second disaster by following these tips:

Tell-tale Signs of a Home Repair Scam - Strangers arriving at your door offering to do repairs—often arriving in an unmarked truck or van.

- Door-to-door salespeople claiming they've just finished a job nearby and have material left over so we can do the job for half the price.

- A post office box address, with no street address, or a telephone number that is just an

answering service.

- High pressure sales tactics.

- Refusal to give you a written estimate, contract, or references.

- Contractors who want to rush your decisions.

- Requirements for a large down payment.

Tips to Protect Yourself From Dishonest Contractors

- Check out any home-repair firm before you sign a contract.

- Look at some of the company's work.

- Take time to check references and compare bids.

- Once you've chosen a contractor, make certain any verbal promises are written into the contract.

- Specify materials, completion date, and don't make the final payment until the work is completed in accordance with the contract.

During Hot Weather

To protect your health when temperatures are extremely high, remember to keep cool and use common sense. The following tips are important:

Drink Plenty of Fluids

During hot weather you will need to increase your fluid intake, regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. During heavy exercise in a hot environment, drink two to four glasses (16-32 ounces) of cool fluids each hour. Warning: If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask how much you should drink while the weather is hot. Don't drink liquids that contain alcohol, or large amounts of sugar—these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also avoid very cold drinks, because they can cause stomach cramps.

Replace Salt and Minerals

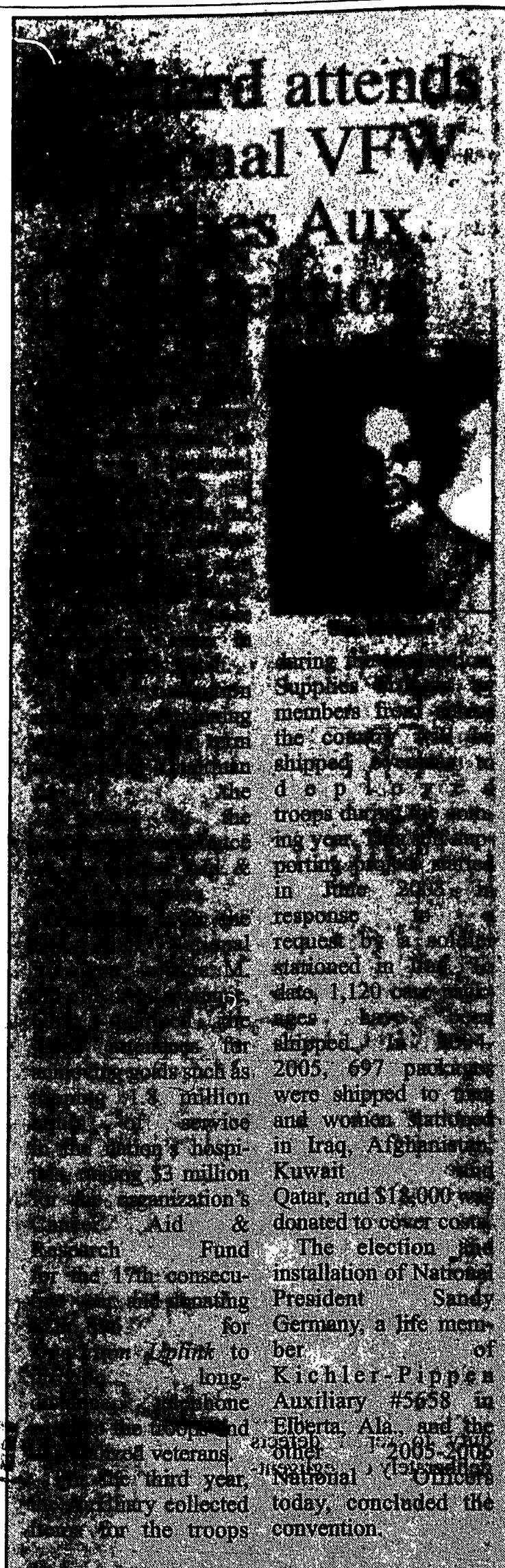
Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from the body. These are necessary for your body and must be replaced. If you must exercise, drink two to four glasses of cool, non-alco-

holic fluids each hour. A sports beverage can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat. However, if you are on a low-salt diet, talk with your doctor before drinking a sports beverage or taking salt tablets.

Wear Appropriate Clothing and Sunscreen

Wear as little clothing as possible when you are at home. Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Sunburn affects your body's ability to cool itself and causes a loss of body fluids. It also causes pain and damages the skin. If you must go outdoors, protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat (also keeps you cooler) along with sunglasses, and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher (the most effective products say "broad spectrum").

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Members of the VFW Auxiliary are working on items for a craft fair.

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Landlord-tenant relationship defined

Landlord-Tenant Act [Sections 89-8-1 through 89-8-27, Miss. Code Ann.]

Despite the adverse impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi residential housing market, it is important for both landlords and tenants to realize that the law in this area remains unchanged. However, as long as we are under a State of Emergency, the price gouging statute prohibits landlords from increasing rents. Although the hurricane's effects may presently make them difficult to fulfill, both landlords and tenants have certain duties and responsibilities to one another, as follows:

1. Section 89-8-23: Landlord Duties

At all times during the tenancy, a landlord shall:

(a) Provide residential dwelling unit to tenant.

(b) Comply with building and housing codes materially affecting health and safety.

(c) Unless deliberately or negligently damaged by the tenant, the dwelling unit and its plumbing, heating and/or cooling systems shall be maintained in the same condition as at the start of the lease.

(d) Landlord has no duty to repair defects deliberately or negligently caused by the tenant. Landlord has no duty to repair defects resulting from a tenant's duties as outlined in Section 89-8-25.

2. Section 89-8-25: Tenant Duties

A tenant shall:

(a) Pay rent according to the terms of the rental or lease agreement.

(b) Keep the premises as clean and safe as the condition of the premises permits.

(c) Dispose from the dwelling unit all ashes, garbage, and waste in a clean, safe manner.

(d) Keep all plumbing fixtures in the dwelling unit as clean as their condition permits.

(e) Use electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air conditioning, and other facilities and appliances, including elevators, in a reasonable manner.

(f) Not deliberately or negligently destroy, damage, or remove any part of the premises or allow any other person to do so.

(g) Not disturb his neighbor's peaceful enjoyment of their premises.

(h) Inform the landlord of any condition which may cause damage to the premises.

(i) Maintain the dwelling unit in the same condition (reasonable wear and tear expected) and comply with building and housing codes materially affecting health and safety.

(j) Not engage in any illegal activity upon the leased premises.

3. Section 89-8-13; Termination of the Lease (both landlord and tenant)

Nonpayment of Rent:

The most common material breach of a lease is the nonpayment of rent. If a tenant fails to pay the rent according to the terms of the rental agreement, the landlord, after giving the tenant 3 days written notice (Miss. Code Ann. Section 89-7-27), may terminate the lease. If the tenant remedies the breach by paying the rent within the 3 day notice period, the lease is not terminated. If the tenant does not pay the rent within the 3 day notice period, the lease is terminated. However, if the tenant does not voluntarily leave, the landlord

cannot simply remove the tenant and his belongings, the landlord must proceed to court and obtain his legal remedies through judicial process.

Other Material Breach:

If a party ("whether landlord or tenant") makes a material breach of the lease for fails to fulfill his duties as a landlord or tenant as outlined in §§ 89-8-23, 89-8-25, the non-breaching party may end the tenancy or resort to any other legal remedy. The non-breaching party should respond to the breach in the following manner:

The non-breaching party may deliver a written notice to the party in breach specifying the acts and omissions constituting the breach and that the rental agreement will terminate upon a date not less than 30 days after receipt of the written notice if the breach is not remedied within a reasonable time not in excess of 30 days...

The lease shall terminate and the tenant shall surrender possession as provided in the notice subject to the following:

(a) If the breach is remediable by repairs or the payment of damages and the breaching party adequately remedies the breach prior to the date specified in the notice, the rental agreement shall not terminate.

(b) If the same breach (of which written notice was given) occurs within 6 months of that initial notice, the nonbreaching party may terminate the lease upon at least 14 days written notice specifying the breach and the date of termination of the lease.

(c) Neither party may end the tenancy for a condition caused by his own deliberate or negligent breach.

4. Section 89-8-15: Repair of Defect by Tenant

If, after 30 days of receipt of written notice, the landlord fails to repair a defect constituting a material breach of lease or duty, the tenant:

• may repair such defect himself; and

• shall be entitled to reimbursement of the repair costs within 45 days after submission to the landlord of receipt

bills for such work, provided that:

— the tenant has fulfilled his duties at a tenant as outlined in § 89-8-25;

— the repair costs does not exceed an amount equal to one month's rent;

— the tenant has not exercised this remedy within the preceding 6 months;

— the tenant is current in his rental payments.

A tenant is not entitled to reimbursement for repair costs higher than the customary charge for such repairs. A tenants repair costs may be offset against future rent.

5. Section 89-8-21: Tenant's Security Deposit

A landlord, by written notice to the tenant, may use only the amounts of a tenant's security deposit that are reasonably necessary to:

— remedy the tenant's defaults in rent payment

— repair damage (above ordinary wear and tear) to the premises caused by the tenant

— clean premises upon termination of tenancy

The written notice by which the landlord claims all or any portion of the security deposit shall itemize the amounts claimed. Any remaining portion of the security deposit shall be returned to the tenant at his request no later than 45 days after the ending the tenancy and leaving the premises. A landlord's retention of a tenant's security deposit in bad faith and in violation of this section may subject the landlord to damages up to \$200 in addition to any actual damages.

For more information please contact:

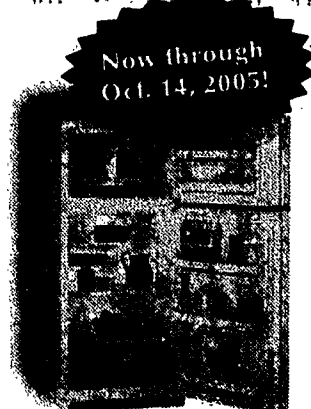
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION

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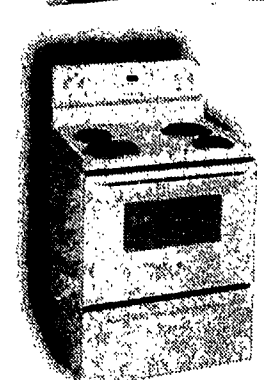
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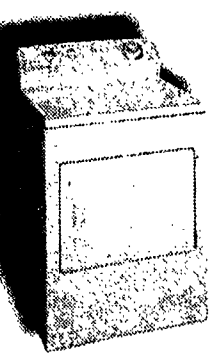


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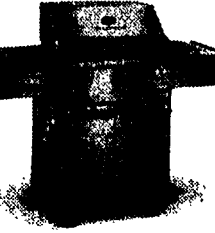


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Echo down but not out after Katrina

BY JOSH MCBEE
Picayune Contributor
(from the Picayune Item)

In a crisis, sometimes little things make a big difference. Randy Ponder, editor and publisher of The Sea Coast Echo out of Bay St. Louis, found that out firsthand when he delivered the Echo's first post-Katrina issue from the driver's seat of a "beat-up old Jeep." There was no charge, no subscription necessary, just tearful appreciation.

"I had people come up and cry, absolutely cry, just because I'm handing them a paper," Ponder said. "That's how important this newspaper is to these people. It's a morale booster. It shows them that, yeah, we've been down, but we're going to come back. Look! Here's our paper right here. It meant a lot to them."

"Even though it didn't have a lot of local information in it, it was a newspaper. It was something they could see and hold in their hand. It was a comfort to them," he said.

Hurricane Katrina destroyed the Echo's office, which sits a block off the beach downtown. Although the location has an elevation of about 26 feet above sea level and never had water from a storm, families using the building as a shelter became trapped as water rose to five feet inside the structure.

Ponder said everything in the building was ruined, from newsprint to the press itself. About a foot and a-half of mud was deposited in the space. He said the total loss could be well over \$1 million.

Still, about four days after the storm passed, Ponder managed to put out a paper for the citizens who remained in the coastal community. His living room became a makeshift newsroom. Computers cluttered the dining room table. Pages were printed by a newspaper in Pikeville, Ky., where Echo editor Geoff Belcher had family.

Most of the Echo's employees who returned to the area came to Ponder's house to work and, in some cases, live. Ponder said several employees quit, having nothing to return to and wanting never to go through something like this again.

"I don't blame them. That's fine," he said. "One of my friend's told me yesterday, 'Randy, what's going to happen is the people that belong here will be here, the



Picayune Item Publisher Tom Andrews, left; and Sea Coast Echo Publisher Randy Ponder look over the Echo as Item press foreman Steven Ellis and press crewman Desmond Morrison run copies of the paper in Picayune.

people that don't want to be here won't come back."

Ponder was born in Cedartown, Ga., and moved to the Bay St. Louis area in 1971, two years after Hurricane Camille ravaged the Gulf Coast. He and his wife, who is an area native, eventually settled in Waveland. For over 30 years, he's heard folks use Camille as the litmus test for assessing property and other storms. He refers to this practice as "Camille Syndrome."

"People were just totally convinced, 'If my house made it through Camille, there's no reason for me to leave. If my house didn't get water during Camille, it won't get water,'" he said.

Ponder admits to having Camille Syndrome prior to Katrina.

The power went off at Ponder's home at 3:30 a.m. Aug. 29. The phones went out around 8 a.m. He watched the storm from his porch and saw trees snapping in two from Category 5 winds.

"Then we noticed the water coming up the road," Ponder said. His home sits about a mile from the beach, about 27

feet above sea level, and as the water rose to a depth of 3 1/2 feet he prepared his family to move into the attic. However, after the eye passed, the water receded.

"There was no major structural damage in my neighborhood, just water damage," he said. "The major damage was done by the water. Everything south of the railroad tracks in Bay St. Louis and Waveland is basically gone."

"If I had it to do over again, I would not stay," Ponder said. Ponder's loyalty to the Echo and dedication to the people it serves compelled him to do otherwise, though.

"I felt a great responsibility to be there and to be able to get a newspaper out. A newspaper is vital to a community and I didn't realize how vital until we finally got our first issue out."

One silver lining the newspaper man sees in the aftermath is how Katrina "made everybody equal." The storm didn't discriminate by race or status in its destruction. With the equality came an increased sense of com-

munity as neighbors came together to aid those in need without having to be asked. Although Ponder doesn't believe the goodwill will last forever, he is sure the South, at least his portion

of it, will rise again.

"The coast will rebuild. We'll be bigger and better and stronger than we ever were," he said. "Bay St. Louis will be back. The whole coast will be back."

For more information, visit www.seacoastecho.com.

Josh McBee is a writer for the Norman (Okla.) Transcript writing for the Picayune Item.

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